Then the additional one is that I think we need to really, in addition to increasing the penalty or the fee they pay, I think they have monies, they are not short of money, what we are short of is their relationship and their involvement in our communities.

So we ought to forge a relationship that says, you have this need here, you are making this request, well, there are American citizens that also need those jobs, and we are just asking you if you would please, sir, please, madam, work with our citizens in rural areas and inner cities and our students so we can give you the product you need.

That requires, not a commitment in theory and theme, but a numerical commitment by year, 2 years, 3 years we can make ourselves.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, that is an important point as we deal with it. I think we need to keep in mind and remind our colleagues that it really is called, not just H1–B visa, working at the top, but it is called for a need for investment at every level.

For instance, on the 100,000 teachers we are talking about that Congress has been engaged in, and we are still fighting the battle to get this year to reduce class sizes for children in the kindergarten and third grade level. That is where we create and get young people interested in the sciences and the mathematics, to create those scientists 8, 10 years from now. The only way we are going to do it is engage them early.

Since the gentlewoman from North Carolina raised that issue, let me just share with her some examples, because many times people, some of our colleagues on the other side want to jump on partisan politics and talk about how bad the public schools and what they are not doing.

Let me just share with my colleagues the student mathematic achievement is improving. That takes a while. It takes an overall commitment and sustained investment over time. Between 1982 and 1996, student improvements have improved their achievement on mathematics by the National Assessment of Education Progress. But the problem we have is, even though the improvement is there, we still need to have more.

If we reduce those class sizes at the early grades where we can really excite a young person in mathematics, and they can see where it leads to, the ones who really we are losing are those in the point the gentlewoman made on the digital divide earlier, they are in those schools that do not have the resources to get them engaged. If no one engages those young people early, it is amazing. My colleagues have been in the classroom as I have, all of you have, it is amazing what one sees in the eyes of those students. Once one sees it in their eyes, one sees exciting things happen.

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And down the road, all of a sudden the youngster decides I want to be an engineer, and maybe there has never been an engineer in their family. But that is how we turn it around. We are probably always going to bring in some of the best from around the world; but we should not, I agree with the gentlewoman, we should not leave the gap open for all the people.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I agree with both overtures of what both my colleagues have just said. I think mainly we must see in this H–1B bill some provision by which outreach can be done in our urban and rural communities to begin to train our young folks in the area of math and science.

Secondarily, I think there has to be an outreach program to the HBCUs of students who are already in math and science. We do have young folks who are coming out of these schools ready to go into the jobs that they are talking about; but if we have not gone to those campuses, and we do not know that they are there, then we tend to think there is not a prepared group of folks out there waiting for the jobs.

When I was director of Gender Equity for Los Angeles Unified, we had to make sure that we went around this Nation and look in every nook and cranny to try and get those who have been prepared for those particular subject areas and disciplines that we were looking for. I think we have no other recourse but to make sure that this bill has some provision of having the high-tech companies utilize those fees for outreach and for training of those who are in that digital divide and in that gap.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Actually, some of them are. And what we want to do is to increase that.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. To expand, yes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. To expand that. And even those that are, we do not have a numerical number of expectancy of their growing their own and their hiring.

So if we increase the amount of money, which I think they will willing cooperate in, because I have not found a high-tech company that says that money will be a problem, I think where the challenge is, and I am not sure it is a challenge we cannot overcome, I think where there may be some resistance to committing themselves to is a numerical number. On the other hand, that is what H–1 visas are all about, increasing the numbers. I am just saying that as we increase those numbers, we should increase the number of a goal that we are willing to commit to; that we will educate, and we will train and we will hire from rural America and from urban cities. The same numerical goal that these companies are requesting the government come and double. That is all I am saying.

It obviously should be something that is workable and that they are willing to do, because it is an investment in America. It is an investment in our communities. It is an economic stimulus that a young person in Wilson County or in Edgecombe County or in the gentlewoman's Compton community knows that there is a company that is interested in me. And, guess what, they are going to do real well because they want to make sure that they fulfill that requirement.

We will not have to look for that person. We will not have to get a recruiter to recruit that person from abroad. They are committed early on. This is not something that is brand new. We have done this before. We have done this in science. Remember when we wanted to send explorers in space? We had a National Science Foundation. We gave scholarships. In high schools we had these academies. I am saying we can put that same kind of energy, saying that Americans' ingenuity and our talent needs to be reinvigorated and give people that incentive.

I just think this is an opportunity to open that door. And I think things in education that we can help in as a government are the technology centers. It is critical. Adding new technology, reducing the class size, making sure kids know more early on in science and math. And we are doing better in science and math.

Years and years ago, I tell people a hundred years ago, I used to head a program at the University of North Carolina for health professionals. At that time the issue was how do we get more rural kids and minorities to go into the health profession; how do we get doctors and nurses. Well, we could not wait until they came out of college. We had to get them in high school. So what we did in high school was to stimulate their teachers and others, and then some of the college students would come early in their career, not at the senior year, but early in their career, and give them advanced courses in math and prepare them for the MCATs and get them with the expectation that they can excel. We just put them on an accelerated path.

So I think the education system, in marrying it with the opportunities, is why education becomes important.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. If I can just ask the gentlewoman from North Carolina to yield for just a second, and then I know the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is here, and he has been absolutely a divine young man to sit here and wait for us as we talk about this, and he wants to get into the fray; but the one thing I am concerned about as well with this H–1B bill is that it is inconceivable as to whether they are professionals who are coming over or persons, as the gentlewoman has just mentioned, straight out of high school.

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to discuss the importance of technology in education. We have a great deal at stake when it comes to the technological literacy of this nation's teachers and students. A strong work force and a strong economy depends on the quality of our schools, the preparedness of our teachers and the ability of our students to